

Michigan Time Traveler

An educational supplement produced by Lansing Newspapers In Education, Inc. and the Michigan Historical Center.

KIDS' History

Happy 125th Birthday, State Capitol!

Every year more than 300,000 people visit Michigan's State Capitol. Today's Time Traveler meets some of the Capitol's historic visitors.

A Capitol Destination

More than 40,000 visitors came to the Capitol's first party, the ceremonial laying of its cornerstone on October 2, 1873. Throughout the next five years, individuals, families and groups came to watch the construction. On September 3, 1878, the *Lansing Republican* reported,

On Thursday last (Aug. 29 [1878]) two companies of excursionists, one from Pontiac and Holly and other from Grand Rapids, met here and jointly occupied the old capitol grounds. The first, or Pontiac party, which came . . . via the C. & N. E. railroad, required 11 coaches . . . and numbered about 700. . . The Grand Rapids excursionists numbered about 300 and filled five coaches. . . Both of these parties appeared to enjoy their visit, although, considerable fault was found with . . . their ability to gain admission to the interior of the new capitol.

The building officially opened on January 1, 1879, with a public dedication. It will celebrate its 125th birthday throughout 2004.



The Capitol under Construction (State Archives)

Things To Do

- * What's happening at the Capitol today? Find articles in the newspaper about the Capitol and the activities of legislators and the Governor.
- * Visit the Capitol during its 125th anniversary and see a special display about touring the Capitol.
- * Make a Capitol scrapbook with your own drawings and photos, newspaper articles and souvenirs.
- * Who were Michigan's three governors during the Capitol's construction? Look in "Find it Online" at www.michigan.gov/hal.
- * Comments or suggestions? Write to TimeTraveler@michigan.gov.

At the Michigan Historical Museum

- * Learn about the buildings that served as Michigan's first two capitol in the Statehood Gallery.
- * It's Michigan's 167th birthday on January 26. Participate in the Statehood Day celebration on Sunday, January 25, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

The Michigan Historical Museum, 702 W. Kalamazoo Street, is located two blocks west of the Capitol in downtown Lansing. Museum admission is free. Hours: Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m. The museum telephone hotline: (517) 373-3559. The museum is part of the Michigan Historical Center, Department of History, Arts and Libraries. Visit us on the Web at www.michiganhistory.org.



Lansing Newspapers In Education (NIE) provides Lansing State Journal newspapers and supplemental teaching materials for area classrooms at little or no cost to the schools. The newspaper becomes a "living textbook," providing students with timely and relevant topics for discussion in class and at home.

If you are interested in sponsoring classroom papers or using the newspaper in your classroom, please contact Patricia O'Hearn, NIE Manager at (517) 377-1242.

Buses Bring Students

Did you study Michigan in the fourth grade? Many schools make our state part of their fourth grade curriculum. Thousands of children in hundreds of classes visit the Capitol as part of their Michigan unit.

The Time Traveler followed fourth grade students from Dearborn on their tour in December 2003. The students met their representative, Gary Woronchak, and their senator, Irma Clark-Coleman. Photographers took class pictures with each legislator. Senator Clark-Coleman invited the class to sit in the Senate Gallery to watch the Senate in action. Then she introduced them from a microphone on the floor of the Senate. Everyone looked up and applauded them for their interest in their state.



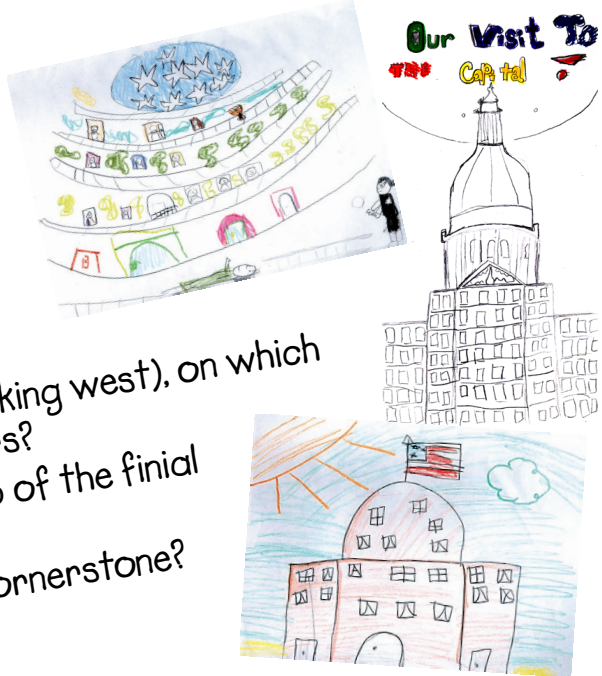
Students gather on the leaded glass floor of the rotunda as they begin their Capitol tour.



A Capitol Challenge

How well do you know your Capitol? (Answers below)

1. How much did it cost to build the Capitol?
2. What is the oldest thing in the Capitol?
3. When facing the front of the Capitol (looking west), on which sides are the Senate and House chambers?
4. How high is it from the ground to the tip of the finial above the dome?
5. What two dates are on the Capitol's cornerstone?

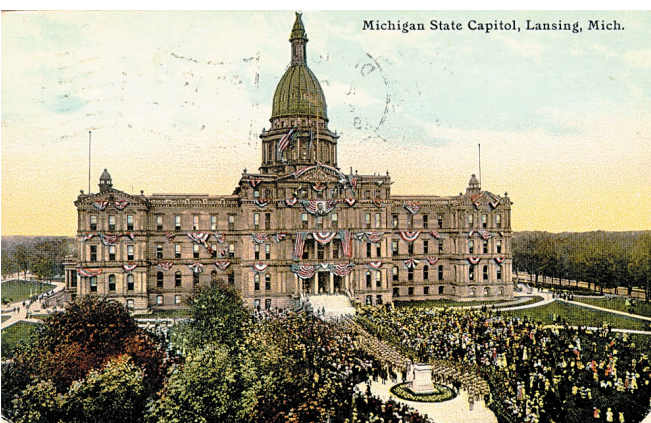


Students make booklets and drawings of their Capitol visit. Moorsbridge-Portage and Spartan Village School students sent these to their tour guides as thank-yous.

Famous Visitors

Abolitionist Sojourner Truth was one of the earliest special visitors to the Capitol. She came on June 2, 1881. She spoke in Representative Hall against a proposal to reinstate the death penalty in Michigan. It was reported that she shouted for joy when told later that the "hanging bill" was defeated.

President Theodore Roosevelt visited the Capitol on May 31, 1907. He came to Michigan for the 50th anniversary of Michigan Agricultural College (now M.S.U.). Flags, bunting and pictures of the president decorated the Capitol building and Lansing homes and businesses. He arrived by train, spoke at the Capitol (where the senators and representatives sang *Michigan, My Michigan* to him), then traveled to the college in a REO automobile driven by R. E. Olds himself. He and William J. Clinton, who visited March 6, 1907, were the only presidents to come to the Capitol while in office.



Michigan State Capitol, Lansing, Mich.

This historic postcard shows the Capitol decorated for President Roosevelt's visit. (Collection of Jerry Lawler)

Harry H. Gardiner was known as "The Human Fly" because he climbed the walls of buildings without using any special equipment. On September 23, 1916, more than 30,000 people came to see him scale the walls and dome of the Capitol. He performed at noon and again in the evening with spotlights shining on him.



(State Archives)

Other famous early Capitol visitors included Susan B. Anthony (1887), William Jennings Bryan (1896), Admiral Dewey (c 1900), John Harvey Kellogg (1903) and Sylvia Pankhurst, a famous suffragist (1911).



Scott, Kaylee and Kaelyn, fourth grade students at Howard Elementary in Dearborn, discover a fossil in the Capitol floor.

Scrapbooking the Capitol



O. A. Jenison moved to Lansing in 1847 when it was announced that the city would be Michigan's capital. He worked at various jobs in government and for printing companies, but history was his hobby. He collected coins, medals, posters and anything he could get about Lansing. He became interested

in the new Capitol as soon as it was announced. He made six large scrapbooks that include photographs, clippings, plans, letters, pamphlets, autographs, ceremonial ribbons and medals, and published items about its construction. The scrapbooks were cut apart to be photographed some time later. The pages now fill six large boxes and are preserved in the State Archives of Michigan.



A Capitol Time Line

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| 1837 | Michigan becomes a state. |
| 1847 | Lansing becomes the capital of Michigan. |
| 1871 | Governor H. P. Baldwin recommends building a new Capitol. |
| 1872 | The design for the Capitol is adopted. Elijah E. Myers is appointed Architect and Superintendent. Construction begins. |
| 1873 | The Capitol cornerstone is laid. |
| 1878 | The building is accepted, and contractors are paid. |
| 1879 | The Capitol is dedicated and first occupied by the 30th Legislature. |
| 1957 | Governor Williams dedicates a Michigan Historical Marker at the Capitol. |
| 1971 | The Michigan State Capitol is placed on the National Register of Historic Places. |
| 1979 | Michigan celebrates the Capitol's 100th birthday. When the cornerstone was opened in 1978, the liner was discovered to be broken and many artifacts had deteriorated. |
| 1989-1992 | The Capitol is restored to its original grandeur. In 1992 it is listed as a National Historic Landmark. |

1. Just under \$1.5 million
2. Maciuties, a type of fossil about 475 million years old, are visible in the black Isle La Motte limestone floor tiles.
3. Senate: south (left); House: north (right)
4. 267 feet
5. The construction start (1872) and ending (1878) dates